

Exhibit B

(12) **EX PARTE REEXAMINATION CERTIFICATE (7732nd)**
United States Patent
Galdes et al. (10) **Number:** **US 6,177,932 C1**
(45) **Certificate Issued:** **Sep. 14, 2010**

- (54) **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR NETWORK BASED CUSTOMER SERVICE**
(75) Inventors: **Frank A. Galdes**, Menlo Park, CA (US);
Mark A. Ericson, Redwood City, CA (US)
(73) Assignee: **Gemini IP, LLC**, Marshall, TX (US)

6,240,444 B1 5/2001 Fin et al.
6,256,620 B1 7/2001 Jawahar et al.
6,289,333 B1 9/2001 Jawahar et al.
6,295,551 B1 9/2001 Roberts et al.
6,381,645 B1 4/2002 Sassin
6,385,646 B1 5/2002 Brown et al.
6,493,447 B1 12/2002 Goss et al.
6,785,708 B1 8/2004 Busey et al.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS

Reexamination Request:
No. 90/009,057, Feb. 27, 2008

Reexamination Certificate for:
Patent No.: **6,177,932**
Issued: **Jan. 23, 2001**
Appl. No.: **09/137,989**
Filed: **Aug. 21, 1998**

- (51) **Int. Cl.**
G06F 17/30 (2006.01)
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **715/733; 705/1; 707/E17.111;**
707/200
(58) **Field of Classification Search** None
See application file for complete search history.

Lieberman, "Leitzia: An Agent That Assists Web Browsing", International Joint Conference on Artificial Intelligence, 1995.*
A. R. Ahuja et al., "The Rapport Multimedia Conferencing System" 1988. In: Robert Allen, ed. "Conference on Office Information Systems" SIGOIS Bulletin, vol. 9, Nos. 2 & 3, IEEE Catalog No. 88CH2582-5 (pp. 1-8).
Lauwers & Lantz, "Collaboration Awareness In Support Of Collaboration Transparency: Requirements For The Next Generation Of Shared Window Systems" in Empowering People, 1990 Chicago Conference Proceedings, Addison-Wesley ISBN: 0-201-50932-6 (pp. 303-311).
Sarin et al. "Computer-Based Real-Time Conferencing Systems" Computer Multimedia Communications. IEEE, Oct. 1985 (pp. 33-45).

* cited by examiner

Primary Examiner—Alexander J Kosowski

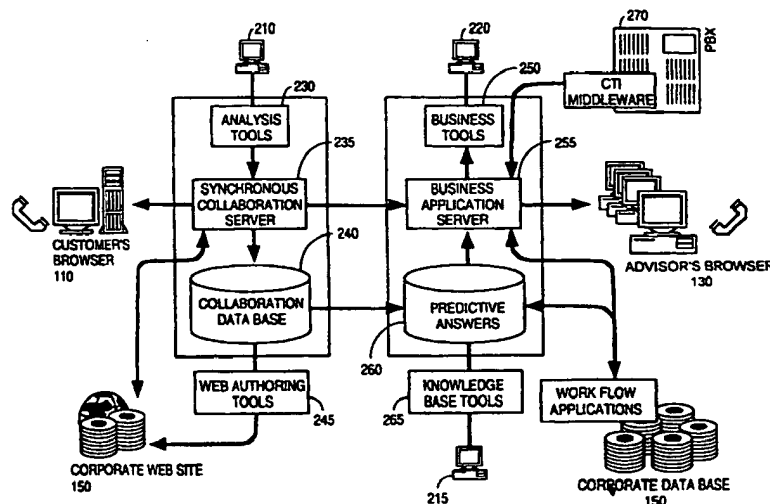
(56) **References Cited**

U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

5,241,625 A 8/1993 Epard et al.
5,563,805 A 10/1996 Arbuckle et al.
5,796,393 A 8/1998 MacNaughton et al.
5,838,682 A 11/1998 Dekelbaum et al.
5,862,330 A 1/1999 Anupam et al.
5,884,032 A 3/1999 Bateman et al.
5,907,547 A 5/1999 Foladare et al.
5,909,545 A 6/1999 Frese, II et al.
5,950,214 A 9/1999 Rivette et al.
5,956,691 A * 9/1999 Powers 705/4
5,983,369 A 11/1999 Bakoglu et al.
5,991,810 A * 11/1999 Shapiro et al. 709/229
6,070,185 A 5/2000 Anupam et al.
6,144,991 A 11/2000 England
6,199,096 B1 3/2001 Mirashrafi et al.
6,230,287 B1 5/2001 Pinard et al.

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method and apparatus for a network based customer service is provided. In response to a client requesting help, a menu including three levels of interaction is displayed. One level of interaction is self-help searching in a database of information. A second level of interaction is asynchronous help, requesting help and receiving a reply. The third level of interaction is synchronous help, interaction with an advisor. If the client selects synchronous help, the method includes the steps of alerting the advisor and displaying a list of previously visited sites by the client to the advisor. The synchronous help method further includes providing a synchronized display between the client and the advisor, such that the advisor sees an identical display to the client.



US 6,177,932 C1

1
EX PARTE
REEXAMINATION CERTIFICATE
ISSUED UNDER 35 U.S.C. 307

THE PATENT IS HEREBY AMENDED AS
INDICATED BELOW.

Matter enclosed in heavy brackets [] appeared in the patent, but has been deleted and is no longer a part of the patent; matter printed in italics indicates additions made to the patent.

ONLY THOSE PARAGRAPHS OF THE
SPECIFICATION AFFECTED BY AMENDMENT
ARE PRINTED HEREIN.

Column 3, lines 30-35:

The collaboration unit **300** further includes a workflow controller **325**. The workflow controller **325** controls what cases are routed to each advisor. The workflow controller **325** also tracks the actions of the advisor and opens *or* closes cases. For one embodiment, the workflow controller **325** is a single system that controls workflow to all of the advisors.

Column 4, lines 24-37:

The database unit **360** includes a database **370** that is searched by the search system **350**. The database **370** includes past postings and contexts. The database **370** may further include a help file, **[a]** frequently asked questions (FAQ), or other data. The database unit **360** may further include a purge unit **380**. The purge unit **380** may purge data in the data unit **370** if the data was not used for a long time. For one embodiment, if a **[datrem]** data in the database **370** is not accessed for a period of time, it is purged. For example, the data may include an expiration date that is refreshed every time an access to the data is made. In this way, unused data is purged. For another embodiment, the purge unit **380** purges data relating to pages that are no longer available.

Column 7, lines 56-61:

At block **650**, the process tests whether the advisor has an answer for the customer's request. The advisor may have more experience than the customer, and may be able to obtain an answer without searching. If the *advisor* has an answer, the process continues to block **670**, otherwise, the process continues to block **655**.

Column 8, lines 5-12:

If an answer was found, the process continues to block **670**. If no answer was found, the process continues to block **665**. At block **665**, the advisor elevates the help request. As described above, elevating the help request passes the request and associated information to someone else. The process then returns to block **650**, where the process determines whether the new advisor, to whom the help request was elevated, **[h as]** has an answer.

Column 8, lines 13-19:

If an answer was found at block **650** or **660**, the process continues to block **670**. At block **670**, the answer is posted to the customer. For one embodiment, the answer may be posted as a separate document, a posting directly associated with the **[we b]** web site, or in some other way. The answer may include text, video, audio or other display technology indicating an answer to the customer's help query.

Column 8, line 64 to column 9, line 3:

At block **740**, a collaboration connection is established between the advisor and the customer. For one embodiment,

2

the advisor presses a button indicating that the advisor is ready to collaborate with the customer. For one embodiment, this establishes a network link between the customer and the advisor. For **[another]** *another* embodiment, the advisor may also establish a voice link with the customer.

AS A RESULT OF REEXAMINATION, IT HAS BEEN DETERMINED THAT:

The patentability of claims **14-18** is confirmed.

Claims **1-9**, **11-13** and **19** are cancelled.

Claim **10** is determined to be patentable as amended.

New claims **20-64** are added and determined to be patentable.

10. [The] A method **[according to claim 9.]** *for processing a client help request, said method comprising:*

responding to a help request from a client;
when said client makes a synchronous help request, alerting at least one responding advisor;
receiving a response from said at least one responding advisor;

synchronizing the display between said client and said at least one responding advisor; and
permitting said at least one responding advisor to control a client browser;

wherein when said client makes an asynchronous help request, the method further comprises:
prompting the client to enter a help question;
forwarding the help question to the advisor;
waiting for the advisor to generate an answer to the help question; and

returning the answer to the client, and
wherein the answer returned to the client comprises at least one of a web page hyperlink and a posting to a web page with hints that may include one or more of the following:

a video of the advisor explaining the answer; and
an audio recording of the hints, and visual images.

20. The method of claim 13, further comprising classifying the help request as the asynchronous help request when the client posts a medium priority help request and classifying the help request as the synchronous help request when the client posts a high priority help request or when the client posts the help request via electronic mail or telephone and an internet connection is established between the client and the at least one advisor.

21. A method for processing a client help request, said method comprising:

responding to a help request from a client;
when said client makes a synchronous help request, alerting at least one responding advisor;
receiving a response from said at least one responding advisor;

synchronizing the display between said client and said at least one responding advisor; and
permitting said at least one responding advisor to control a client browser;

wherein the at least one responding advisor responds through a collaboration unit,

wherein the collaboration unit comprises a workflow controller configured to control what cases are routed to each advisor of the at least one responding advisor, and

US 6,177,932 C1

3

wherein the workflow controller is configured to track actions of the at least one responding advisor; to open a help request and to close a help request.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein when a new case is opened by the workflow controller, a context grabbing unit collects context information from a client's system to aid the at least one responding advisor in helping the client.

23. The method of claim 22, wherein the context information comprises web tracks of the client.

24. The method of claim 23, wherein the web tracks comprise web site locations that the client visited prior to asking for help.

25. The method of claim 24, wherein the web tracks comprise actions of the client at the web site locations that the client visited prior to asking for help.

26. The method of claim 22, wherein the context information comprises client history.

27. The method of claim 23, wherein the client history comprises previous questions asked by the client and personal information of the client.

28. A method for processing a client help request, said method comprising:

responding to a help request from a client;
when said client makes a synchronous help request, alerting at least one responding advisor;
receiving a response from said at least one responding advisor;

synchronizing the display between said client and said at least one responding advisor; and
permitting said at least one responding advisor to control a client browser;

wherein the at least one responding advisor responds through a collaboration unit,

wherein the collaboration unit comprises a communication channel,

wherein the collaboration unit comprises a synchronization unit,

wherein the collaboration unit further comprises a search system configured to permit the at least one responding advisor to search a database in a database unit to answer any questions from the client, and

wherein if the at least one responding advisor does not know the answer to the client's questions, the search system is automatically engaged to find an answer.

29. The method of claim 28, wherein if the answer is not found, an elevation unit is provided, the elevation unit elevating the help request from the client.

30. The method of claim 29, further comprising the elevation unit collecting context information gathered by a context grabbing unit and information from a collaborative session collected by a workflow controller, and then passing the context information and the information from the collaborative session to another advisor.

31. The method of claim 30, wherein the another advisor comprises one of, a manager or a technical specialist.

32. A method for processing a client help request, said method comprising:

responding to a help request from a client;
when said client makes a synchronous help request, alerting at least one responding advisor;
receiving a response from said at least one responding advisor;

synchronizing the display between said client and said at least one responding advisor;

permitting said at least one responding advisor to control a client browser; and

4

providing a post generator if an answer is found to the help request from the client, the posting generator allowing the at least one responding advisor to place a posting to a web page that was discussed with the client,

wherein the posting is associated with a specific web page for the client.

33. The method of claim 32, wherein the posting is persistent and appears on the specific web page every time the client opens the specific web page or until the client closes the posting.

34. The method of claim 32, wherein the posting is stored in a database not belonging to the client.

35. A method for processing a client help request, said method comprising:

responding to a help request from a client;
when said client makes a synchronous help request, alerting at least one responding advisor;
receiving a response from said at least one responding advisor;

synchronizing the display between said client and said at least one responding advisor;

permitting said at least one responding advisor to control a client browser; and

testing whether the client is using a thin client or a thick client,

wherein the thick client comprises a system that automatically collects all relevant information from the client or the help request if it was received through an electronic mail or a telephone, and the thin client comprises a system that collects the client's identity.

36. The method of claim 35, further comprising collecting context information if the client is using a thin client.

37. The method of claim 35, further comprising querying to determine the priority of a response.

38. The method of claim 37, further comprising the client indicating a number or type of priority, the type of priority being one of, low priority, medium priority or high priority.

39. The method of claim 38, further comprising initiating a self-service lookup if the type of priority is low priority.

40. The method of claim 38, further comprising initiating an asynchronous collaboration if the type of priority is medium priority.

41. The method of claim 38, further comprising initiating a synchronous collaboration if the type of priority is high priority.

42. The method of claim 39, further comprising testing whether the client has selected a search basis wherein the search basis comprises at least one of 1) keyword or text search, 2) context or a current location from which help was requested, 3) structured search or searching through a tree, or 4) any combination thereof.

43. The method of claim 42, further comprising displaying a search data entry block to allow the client to type in a search if the search basis is a keyword or text search.

44. The method of claim 43, further comprising providing the client search capabilities for at least one of, a boolean search, natural language or English language search, or any combination thereof.

45. The method of claim 42, further comprising displaying postings relating to a current web page from which the client requested help if the search basis is a current location from which help was requested.

46. The method of claim 45, further comprising displaying the postings with headers to indicate the topic of the postings and allowing the client to select postings that are relevant to the client's questions.

US 6,177,932 C1

5

47. The method of claim 42, further comprising obtaining web tracks if the search basis is a context search basis, wherein the web tracks comprise at least one of, past locations or web pages the client visited prior to requesting help, actions of the client at each of the past locations, or any combination thereof.

48. The method of claim 44, further comprising allowing the client to select how closely the context, text, or page location of the client has to match the data associated with the posting to be displayed.

49. The method of claim 48, further comprising displaying hierarchical folders with headers indicating the type of postings included in each folders.

50. The method of claim 49, further comprising allowing the client to narrow or broaden a search by using slide selection bars.

51. The method of claim 49, further comprising determining if an answer is found to the help request from the client.

52. The method of claim 51, further comprising the client indicating that the answer is found by activating an answer-found button if the answer is found.

53. The method of claim 42, further comprising the client executing a new search or changing the search basis if the answer is not found.

54. The method of claim 51, further comprising the client changing the type of priority if the answer is not found.

55. The method of claim 54, further comprising changing the type of priority from low priority to medium priority or high priority, wherein the low priority is a self-service look up, the medium priority is an asynchronous collaboration, and the high priority is a synchronous collaboration.

56. The method of claim 52, further comprising the client creating a posting associated with a web page to clarify that an answer was found or what the answer is.

57. The method of claim 56, further comprising making the posting persistent and remaining associated with the web page for the client.

58. The method of claim 56, further comprising adding to the posting at least one of, the client's web tracks, the client's search text, or any combination thereof.

59. The method of claim 42, further comprising automatically selecting a context search basis and automatically determining and pushing an answer to the client by an electronic agent.

60. A method for processing a client help request, said method comprising:

classifying the help request as one of a synchronous help request and an asynchronous help request;

when synchronous help is requested, alerting at least one advisor, said at least one advisor conversing with the client over a link to deduce a problem;

permitting said at least one advisor to synchronize displays with the client and control the client browser;

generating an answer to the problem;

associating the answer with the client, such that the client can retrieve the answer;

providing at least one of a hyper-linked web page, a posting to a web page, and a persistent answer to a client system, wherein the synchronizing of displays comprises the at least one advisor establishing a synchronized collaboration window that allows the at least one advisor to the same identical display of the client even if the client's question for help request comes from a personalized web page;

the at least one advisor opening a database window that is a separate window from the synchronized collaboration

6

window, to search a database if the at least one advisor does not have an answer to the client's question for the help request; and

elevating the help request and the client interacting with a new advisor who receives the elevated request if the at least one advisor does not have an answer to the client's question for the help request.

61. A method for processing a client help request, said method comprising:

classifying the help request as one of a synchronous help request and an asynchronous help request;

when synchronous help is requested, alerting at least one advisor, said at least one advisor conversing with the client over a link to deduce a problem;

permitting said at least one advisor to synchronize displays with the client and control the client browser;

generating an answer to the problem;

associating the answer with the client, such that the client can retrieve the answer;

providing at least one of a hyper-linked web page, a posting to a web page, and a persistent answer to a client system, wherein the synchronizing of displays comprises the at least one advisor establishing a synchronized collaboration window that allows the at least one advisor to the same identical display of the client even if the client's question for the help request comes from a personalized web page;

the at least one advisor opening a database window that is a separate window from the synchronized collaboration window, to search a database if the at least one advisor does not have an answer to the client's question for the help request; and

adding the answer to the database if the answer was not found in the database.

62. A method for processing a client help request, said method comprising:

classifying the help request as one of a synchronous help request and an asynchronous help request;

when synchronous help is requested, alerting at least one advisor, said at least one advisor conversing with the client over a link to deduce a problem;

permitting said at least one advisor to synchronize displays with the client and control the client browser;

generating an answer to the problem;

associating the answer with the client, such that the client can retrieve the answer;

providing at least one of a hyper-linked web page, a posting to a web page, and a persistent answer to a client system, wherein the synchronizing of displays comprises the at least one advisor establishing a synchronized collaboration window that allows the at least one advisor to the same identical display of the client even if the client's question for the help request comes from a personalized web page;

the at least one advisor opening a database window that is a separate window from the synchronized collaboration window, to search a database if the at least one advisor does not have an answer to the client's question for the help request; and

adding information associated with a specific question of the client and web tracks of the client to the database if the answer was found in the database.

63. A method for processing a client help request, said method comprising:

US 6,177,932 C1

7

classifying the help request as one of a synchronous help request and an asynchronous help request;
 when synchronous help is requested, alerting at least one advisor, said at least one advisor conversing with the client over a link to deduce a problem;
 permitting said at least one advisor to synchronize displays with the client and control the client browser;
 generating an answer to the problem;
 associating the answer with the client, such that the client can retrieve the answer;
 providing at least one of a hyper-linked web page, a posting to a web page, and a persistent answer to a client system; and
 the client using slide bars to change answers displayed to the client,
 wherein the change of the answers displayed comprises at least one of, allowing the client to determine the similarity between web tracks of a previous answer found in a database and web tracks associated with the help request, allowing the client to determine the length of an answer to the help request, allowing the client to determine the complexity of an answer to the help request, allowing the client to determine the format of an answer to the help request, allowing the client to determine the importance of each term or each previous location of a web page in web tracks associated with the help request, or any combination thereof.
 64. A method for processing a client help request, said method comprising:
 classifying the help request as one of a synchronous help request and an asynchronous help request;

8

when synchronous help is requested, alerting at least one advisor, said at least one advisor conversing with the client over a link to deduce a problem;
 permitting said at least one advisor to synchronize a display of the client and a display of the at least one advisor and to control the client browser;
 searching a predictive answer system for a response to the help request, the predictive answer system using a pattern matching with a database to determine whether the response is applicable, the pattern comprising client profile and context information, the context information comprising at least one of previous web page locations visited by the client and actions on the previous web page locations;
 generating an answer to the problem;
 associating the answer with the client, such that the client can retrieve the answer;
 providing at least one of a hyper-linked web page, a posting to a web page, and a persistent answer to a client system; and
 adding information from the client to a database with the answer, the information from the client comprising at least one of, the client's web tracks, meta-tags, information associated with the help request, the help request, or any combination thereof.

* * * * *